



News Release

STATE OF MARYLAND

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Public Defender's Office Drops Suit Against Central Booking and Intake Center

Agency acknowledges "24-hour rule" violations virtually eliminated

TOWSON, MD (September 15, 2006)---The Baltimore Public Defender's Office today asked a judge to drop the suit against Baltimore's Central Booking and Intake Center which had arisen over complaints that arrestees were being held for longer than 24 hours before being presented to a court commissioner. Baltimore Circuit Court Judge John Glynn signed the order dismissing the suit this morning.

Central Booking, one of the nation's busiest booking centers, annually processes nearly 100,000 men and women. Everyone arrested in the City of Baltimore is brought there for booking and presentment before a court commissioner.

The order dropping the suit says that this year, no one has been held beyond 24 hours without seeing a judicial officer except for extremely rare cases of "unusual and extenuating circumstances." The Maryland Division of Pretrial Detention and Services, which supervises the facility, says that only three cases this year have been delayed beyond 24 hours. Two involved arrestees who suffered medical emergencies; the third required investigators to resolve the validity of a murder warrant issued for the arrestee.

"Warden Mitch Franks has done an outstanding job," says William J. Smith, Commissioner of the Division of Pretrial Detention and Services (DPDS). "He has an Assistant Warden whose sole responsibility is the booking floor, and a correctional lieutenant who concentrates on keeping the booking line moving. The entire staff has really worked hard to alleviate this problem."

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Central Booking has no control over the flow of arrestees through its doors. Typically, nearly 300 people a day come through, sometimes in large groups at one time. In the past 12 months, the Center has booked more than 93,000 men and women.

“Baltimore Central Booking and Intake Center is a partnership,” says Warden Franks. “It’s all about cooperation between Pretrial Services, City Police, the State’s Attorney’s Office, the Public Defender, the Court Commissioners and other law enforcement agencies.”

Central Booking is one of three institutions in the Maryland Division of Pretrial Detention and Services. The others are the Baltimore Men’s and Women’s Detention Centers. Maryland’s Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, under the leadership of Secretary Mary Ann Saar, is the only such agency in the nation to operate both state prisons and a large city’s detention and booking facilities.

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